

REMARKS

Applicant thanks the Examiner for the very thorough consideration given the present application.

Claims 2-4 and 6-16 are now present in this application. Claims 2 and 11 are independent.

Amendments have been made to the specification, claims 1 and 5 have been canceled, and claims 2, 6, 8, 10, 11 and 14-16 have been amended. No new matter is involved. Reconsideration of this application, as amended, is respectfully requested.

Priority Under 35 U.S.C. § 119

Applicant thanks the Examiner for acknowledging Applicants' claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119, and receipt of the certified priority document.

Specification Amendments

Applicant has amended the specification in order to correct minor typographical errors.

Claim Objections

The Examiner has objected to claims 2, 11, 13, 14 and 16 because of several informalities. In order to overcome this objection, Applicant has amended claims 2, 11, 13 and 14 in order to correct the deficiencies pointed out by the Examiner. Applicant respectfully traverses the objection to claim 16, however, because claim 16 recites coupling holes in its first line that serve to provide proper antecedent basis for "the coupling holes" in the second line of claim 16.

Reconsideration and withdrawal of this objection are respectfully requested.

Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 1 and 6-9 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as anticipated by U.S. Patent 3,603,631 to White. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

A complete discussion of the Examiner's rejection is set forth in the Office Action, and is not being repeated here.

Initially, it is noted that claim 1 has been canceled and claims 6-9 have been amended to depend from claim 2. Accordingly, this rejection is moot.

Claims 1-11 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102 as being anticipated by U.S. Patent 6,082,787 to Chioffi et al. (hereinafter, "Chioffi"). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

A complete discussion of the Examiner's rejection is set forth in the Office Action, and is not being repeated here.

Initially, it is noted that claims 1 and 5 have been canceled, so this rejection is moot with respect to claims 1 and 5.

Claim 2, as amended, recites a combination of features that are not disclosed by Chioffi. For example, claim 2 recites, among other features, "a hanging protrusion located on one side of each of the holders to be held by an upper end of the first reception part." Chioffi does not disclose such a feature (found in originally filed claim 5). In fact, this feature is not even discussed in any detail in the rejection.

Chioffi's holders 8 and 9 merely have locking projections 8a and 9a, shown in Figs. 3 and 6 and described in col. 3, lines 56-64, for example. Projections 8a and 9a are not "hanging protrusions," in that they do not hang from the holders but are merely stepped portions of the holders.

Accordingly, claim 2, as amended, is not anticipated by Chioffi.

Moreover, because claims 3, 4 and 6-10 depend from claim 2, claims 3, 4 and 6-10 are not anticipated by Chioffi, at least because claims 3, 4 and 6-10 depend from, and therefore, contain all the features of claim 2.

Claim 11 is not anticipated by Chioffi, either, because Chioffi does not disclose a latch cap in general, or a latch cap that covers first and second reception parts to prevent separation of the holders and the springs. The Office Action alleges that Chioffi "787 illustrates structure on the entry or front side of the portions 8 and 9 and on the rear side where either structure reads on "latch cap." Applicants respectfully disagree.

Claim 11 separately recites a latch body and a latch cap. The Office Action does not explain what separate elements in Chioffi are the latch body and the latch cap. It appears to Applicant that Chioffi does not disclose a separate latch body and a separate latch cap, as recited. If anything, Chioffi has a single latch body 1. This does not anticipate claim 11, which separately recites a latch body and a latch cap.

Accordingly, the Office Action fails to make out a *prima facie* case of anticipation of claims 2-4 and 6-11.

Reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection of claims 1-11 is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-5, 9, 11-13, 15 and 16 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent 2,869,952 to Saunders. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

This rejection is moot with respect to claims 1 and 5, which have been canceled.

Applicant notes that claim 2 has been rewritten in independent form and includes the features of claim 5, as well. Claims 3, 4, 9, 15 and 16 depend, either directly or indirectly from claim 2.

Applicant respectfully submits that Saunders does not disclose the positively recited feature of claim 3, i.e., a pair of passing holes communicating with the second reception parts formed at both sides of the first reception part to let the holders pass through. This feature is not even addressed in the rejection.

Furthermore, claim 3 depends from claim 2, which has been amended to positively recite a hanging protrusion formed on one side of each of the holders to be held by an upper end of the first reception part (formerly found in currently canceled claim 5). Saunders does not disclose this feature. In fact, this feature is not even addressed in the rejection

Accordingly, the Office Action fails to make out a *prima facie* case of anticipation of claims 2-4, 9, 11-13, 15 and 16.

Reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection of claims 1-5, 9, 11-13, 15 and 16 is respectfully requested.

Allowable Subject Matter

By only objection to claim 14, the Examiner indicates that claim 14 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form.

Objected-to claim 14 has been rewritten into independent form, and should therefore be allowed.

Additional Cited References

Because the remaining references cited by the Examiner have not been utilized to reject the claims, but have merely been cited to show the state of the art, no comment need be made with respect thereto.

CONCLUSION

All of the stated grounds of rejection have been properly traversed, accommodated, or rendered moot. Applicants therefore respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider all presently outstanding rejections and that they be withdrawn. It is believed that a full and complete response has been made to the outstanding Office Action, and as such, the present application is in condition for allowance.

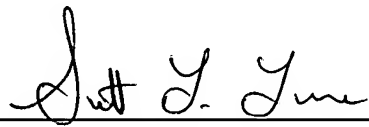
If the Examiner believes, for any reason, that personal communication will expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone Robert J. Webster, Registration No. 46,472, at (703) 205-8000, in the Washington, D.C. area.

Prompt and favorable consideration of this Amendment is respectfully requested.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16 or 1.17; particularly, extension of time fees.

Respectfully submitted,

BIRCH, STEWART, KOLASCH & BIRCH, LLP

By:  #41,458
James T. Eller, Jr.
Reg. No.: 39,538

JTE/RJW/adT

P.O. Box 747
Falls Church, Virginia 22040-0747
Telephone: (703) 205-8000

Attachment: Amended Abstract of the Disclosure